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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 USNATO 000302

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STATE FOR EUR A/S GORDON AND VCI A/S GOTTEMOELLER

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KACT](#) [MNUC](#) [NATO](#) [EL](#) [EZ](#) [ZB](#)
SUBJECT: A/S'S GORDON AND GOTTEMOELLER DISCUSS MOSCOW
SUMMIT WITH BALTICS, CZECHS & POLES

Classified By: Ambassador Daalder for reasons 1.4(B)&(D).

11. (SBU) This message has been cleared by EUR A/S Gordon and VCI A/S Gottemoeller.

12. (C/NF) Summary: On July 8, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Gordon and Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance and Implementation Gottemoeller exchanged views regarding Russia's intentions and tactics with representatives of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. They discussed Russian attempts to divide the Alliance over Georgia, missile defense and other differences. While this group remains suspicious of Russian intentions, A/S Gordon and A/S Gottemoeller described the surprising successes achieved at the Summit, and gave insights into the Medvedev/Putin dynamic and its effects on counterpart negotiators. End Summary.

COFFEE WITH "THE USUAL SUSPECTS"

13. (C/NF) A/S Gordon and A/S Gottemoeller exchanged post-Moscow Summit views with Baltic, Czech and Polish representatives at NATO. Lithuanian Permanent Representative (PermRep) Linkevicius thanked them for the "special treatment" of the meeting. Describing Baltic "vigilance" on NATO-Russia issues, Linkevicius recounted evidence of Russian "negativity and unreliability" in recent months, notably its August 2008 invasion of Georgia.

14. (C/NF) The situation was getting worse, he added, with an ongoing military build-up in the sub-Caucasus, which he characterized as Russia "fixing a new status quo" which it would then push others to accept as a fait accompli. This pressure would take the form of NATO and others being asked to "face reality"; if interlocutors accepted the new status quo, it would be followed by further provocations and future rounds of "reality-facing." At Corfu, he added, some Allies were espousing the "face reality" line, but Lithuania and others in the room disagreed.

15. (C/NF) Linkevicius emphasized the trust which the Baltic states had for the U.S. --if it hadn't been for the USG,

none of them would have been able to join NATO -- but continued his negative assessment of Russia's motivations and actions. Russia's Ambassador to NATO Rogozin seemed at times to be "laughing at" NATO, and was working to divide Allies. It troubled Linkevicius that we as Allies sometimes seemed to be making it easy for the Russians. In A/S Gordon's discussion to the NAC earlier that morning on military-to-military cooperation, for example, he had cited peacekeeping cooperation as a possibility. The problem as Linkevicius saw it was that Russia's philosophy of "peacekeeping" was arguably not congruent with the NATO version. He closed by urging NATO to stick with previously-agreed decisions on Russia.

GORDON: SOBER REALISM IN ORDER, BUT RESULTS POSITIVE

16. (C/NF) A/S Gordon responded that he did not want to overstate success in Moscow. Recent Russian actions vis-a-vis Georgia with the OSCE and UN missions, as well as continuing questions about domestic democracy, couldn't be papered over. That said, the degree of success achieved in Moscow was surprising, given the level of "testing" to which Moscow had subjected Washington in recent months. In addition, the Russians had not shown any flexibility toward security cooperation with NATO, yet had been surprisingly open with the U.S. - possibly indicating a Russian desire for Summit success. In any event, Gordon believed that U.S. unwillingness to cave on issues ahead of the Summit had delivered positive results.

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MEDVEDEV-PUTIN: GOOD COP-BAD COP?

17. (C/NF) Estonia's PermRep Luik picked up on a "dual-track" theme of seeking common ground with the Russians while not hesitating to disagree on important issues. He added that the Baltic states "fully trusted" the U.S. to pursue both tracks in a credible manner. Luik asked how, given the importance of sending clear signals to Russia, NATO could pro-actively help Georgia. Perhaps a non-recognition policy toward the regimes controlling South Ossetia and Abkhazia could help, along with possible sanctions. The Estonian fear was that any concessions made to the U.S. and/or NATO by Medvedev would somehow be quashed or subverted by Putin. FM Lavrov, meanwhile, was walking an extremely fine line between the two leaders, a point with which A/S Gottemoeller agreed.

18. (C/NF) A/S Gordon said that the situation in Georgia was doubly unfortunate: The removal of the OSCE and UN missions not only meant the loss of objective eyes on the ground, but also lowered Georgia's international profile as a conflict zone. Allies needed to find new and creative ways to keep this conflict in public view. The U.S. has been consistent on Georgia, including through its firm stances on the OSCE and UN missions, consistent support for Georgia's territorial integrity, the recent launch of the US-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, visits by A/S Gordon and (soon) Vice President Biden, and \$1 billion in U.S. assistance. The whole Medvedev-Putin dynamic was fascinating, and contained elements of good cop-bad cop. To demonstrate USG priorities, though, Gordon compared the amount of time the two Russian leaders got with President Obama at the Summit: Medvedev, President Obama's acknowledged counterpart, had a 4.5 hour state lunch, two one-on-one sessions, and a major press conference. Putin, by contrast, only had a private breakfast. Russian cooperation, he added, seemed to be driven by their desire to be players in, e.g., Afghanistan.

19. (C/NF) A/S Gottemoeller added that the Russians in START-follow-on negotiations had been playing a delicate game. Her counterparts in the initial negotiations in Rome,

which began April 24, had clearly lacked authority to make decisions; yet as the Summit grew closer and pressure built, they became more proactive. For example, the Joint Understanding which Presidents Obama and Medvedev had agreed to sign at the Summit had remained vague and general at Russian insistence as late as three days before the Summit. Following Russian MFA consultations with Medvedev, however, numbers had been inserted and a detailed and specific set of commitments had emerged. She added that the Medvedev/Putin relationship was a horse we couldn't ride from outside, but that we needed to steer as best we could. She also noted that Russia's economic and business elites were displaying increasing frustration with Putin. They had come extremely close to a WTO agreement, for example, which Putin had torpedoed at a crucial moment.

¶10. (C/NF) A/S Gordon added that Putin's main message in the Obama breakfast was the same "Soviet narrative of the last 20 years" with which he had been lecturing us for years: USG hubris had led to an unbalanced security situation in Europe, with different classes of security citizenship. When Linkevicius quoted Russian media reports that President Obama had said he would discuss serious issues with Putin and non-controversial items with Medvedev, both Assistant Secretaries doubted strongly that anything like that had been said to the notoriously inventive Russian media.

CZECHS ON MD: IF YOU DON'T LIKE PARLIAMENT, WAIT FOR NEXT ONE

¶11. (C/NF) Czech charge Borkovec said that NATO had been in the uncomfortable position at the NATO-Russia Council (NRC)

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meeting in Corfu of appearing to be demandeurs. He described this as a time-tested Russian tactic, and one which they were attempting to use to divide Allies over Georgia. Borkovec then turned to missile defense (MD), and surprisingly outlined a timetable for Czech ratification of their two MD-related treaties: The current "temporary" government would likely be replaced during the elections scheduled for early October, after which the Czech parliament would follow the course of the Senate and ratify both treaties by early 2010, if not later this year. He followed these prognostications with two questions: Did the U.S. have a timeline for its cooperative MD threat assessment with the Russians as discussed in Moscow, and did we have any opinion on the hard line Lavrov had taken in Corfu, linking START follow-on chances to the proposed MD European Site?

¶12. (C/NF) A/S Gottemoeller replied that the technical threat assessment on MD would be in the hands of newly-confirmed Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher, and on the Russian side those of Deputy FM Sergey Ryabkov. U/S Tauscher had tried to contact Ryabkov following her June 27 confirmation, hoping to get the assessment started before the end of July. A/S Gottemoeller was able to pass that message to her counterpart, Russian post-START negotiator Anatoly Antonov, the day before (July 7) in Moscow. Regarding the question on Lavrov's linkage of offense and defense, A/S Gordon noted the different stances Russia had taken with NATO in Corfu and with the U.S. in Moscow.

LATVIA: NAC COULD DEVOLVE TO "NATO CAUCUS AT NRC"

¶13. (C/NF) Latvian PermRep Eichmanis repeated that the Russians were able to paint NATO as demandeurs, and described it as a Russian advantage that made "the usual suspects" extremely uncomfortable. NATO is also in a "reset" situation vis--vis Russia; but if the Alliance continues to allow Russia to set the rules of the game piecemeal, we would remain divided and would run the risk that the NAC could wind

up as the "NATO Caucus at the NRC." He drew a parallel with Russian tactics in commercial negotiations. In negotiating energy deals with, e.g., Shell or BP, the Russians would ooze cooperation during the first, competitive round of negotiations. Once the second round began with a specific bidder, however, Russia's cut suddenly became 55 percent, and its negotiating "partner" was now staring at a choice between accepting 45 percent or calling off the whole process and shouldering the blame for failure.

¶14. (C/NF) Poland's deputy PermRep Bugajski made two specific points: First, that Poland appreciated the statement made by Madeleine Albright at the Strategic Concept conference in Brussels the day before (July 7) -- that it was important to focus on the positive when dealing with Russia, but also important not to avoid disagreements. Secondly, as others had noted, avoiding demandeur status was important. Poland could go along with the two-track approach to dealing with the Russians, as long as that process involved periodic assessments of how cooperation was proceeding. Finally, he had two questions -- how prominently did Georgia's security feature in the Moscow Summit agenda; and he asked A/S Gottemoeller to expand on the link between offensive and defensive systems contained in the Joint Understanding on seeking reductions in strategic offensive systems.

¶15. (C/NF) A/S Gordon answered the first question by quoting President Obama's commitment to Georgia's sovereign integrity. He also noted the President's requests to both the Georgians and Russians to avoid provocative actions. A/S Gottemoeller fielded the second question by explaining that the language in paragraph 5 of the Joint Understanding linking strategic offense and strategic defense was the same preambular language contained in START 1, the ABM Treaty, President Bush's remarks in May 2001, etc. No ground had

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been broken by a preambular linking of offensive and defensive strategic systems in Moscow.
DAALDER